

## **Research Ethics Sub-Committee 17 May 2017**

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### **Summary of Proceedings**

*Then fiftieth meeting of the Research Ethics Sub-Committee was held at 1400 on 17 May 2017. Papers for the meeting are available on the research Ethics Sub-Committee webpage: <http://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/partners/academic-governance/research-ethics-sub-committee/> The Research Ethics Sub-Committee's proceedings are summarized below. Full minutes will be published on the website once they have been approved by the Sub-Committee at its next meeting on 04 October 2017.*

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### **Overview of the management of Research Ethics at School level**

- (a) The Sub-Committee received a report providing an overview of the arrangements that each School had put in place to manage research ethics following the dissolution of the Faculty Research Ethics Committees. Representatives from the Schools noted that the arrangements had operated well so far although it was felt that there was now less opportunity to share good practice as in the former faculty ethics committees there were colleagues from different disciplines that could bring different perspectives whereas in the new arrangements there was limited cross-discipline discussion.
- (b) It was agreed that the Sub-Committee would, in future, receive this report once a year alongside the research ethics audit report from each school so that feedback could be received on how each Schools' approach was functioning, whether there were any improvements could be made, and also whether any good practice could be shared amongst Schools. It was also agreed that the timing of the research ethics away day would be reviewed to ensure that a greater number of colleagues could attend.

### **PREVENT update**

- (c) It was confirmed that since the last meeting of the Sub-Committee there had been two instances of the PREVENT question being completed by students so that a positive response was recorded in the online system. One of the instances concerned an analysis of terrorism in the media and was approved as low risk. The other instance had been a literature review of other researchers' work concerning terrorism and was also approved as low risk. The six instances, four had been erroneous, and two had been approved as low risk. It was again noted that so far the only instances of the PREVENT question being completed had been in connection with student research projects and that no staff projects had identified their research as falling into the categories set out in the system.

### **Research Ethics Procedures**

- (d) The Sub-Committee considered a proposal for revisions to the University's Research Ethics Procedures. The proposals had been formulated by a SLWG and feedback had

been received from members of the Research Ethics Sub-Committee and also the wider network of Local Research Ethics Co-ordinators. The proposed changes also took into account feedback received from students and staff on research ethics procedures over the past three years as applicants and as reviewers, and from research module leaders. The Sub-Committee considered the proposals and agreed in principle to recommend their approval by the Research & Enterprise Committee subject to consideration of some further feedback that had not been received in time for consideration at this meeting of the Sub-Committee. It was agreed that the SLWG would re-convene to consider the further feedback and a final version of the proposals, approved by Chair's action, would be provided for consideration by the Research & Enterprise Committee.

### **Feedback from the away-day for the management of ethics in the University**

- (e) The Chair presented a verbal report providing an overview of the discussions and feedback from the recent research ethics discussion event held on 12 May 2017. The event had been split into two main sessions. In the first session, the Sub-Committee's external member, Dr Niall Scott, had presented thought piece on Research Ethics in the University sector. In the second session attendees were split into groups to discuss the proposals for revisions to the University's Research Ethics Procedures. Feedback was then presented from each group and discussed further by all attendees. The feedback was sent to the SLWG that was overseeing the development of the revised procedures and would feed into the final proposals. Attendees agreed that the event had been a success, although attendance was lower than expected. It was proposed that the event should be held earlier in the academic year as it would then avoid the main marking and exam periods. It was also agreed that the next time the away day was held more time should be dedicated to discussion concerning the sharing of good practice.